THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The work of doubling of Jaipur-Dausa has been included in the Budget 2005-06. Preliminary arrangements like preparation of plans, estimate, etc. have been taken up. Detailed estimate is under sanction.

(c) Doubling of single line section is taken up when their carrying capacity is saturated. Doubling of Dausa-Bandikui section will be considered once the traffic warrants the same subject to a availability of resources.

Extension Of Shivganga Express upto Balia

†1173. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to extend Shivganga Express (2559/2560) from New Delhi upto Balia keeping in view the crowd of passengers and number of trains;

(b) if so, by when and the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) At present, Ballia is well connected to Delhi/New Delhi by 6 pairs of trains including 2561/2562 Darbhanga-New Delhi Swatantrata Sainani Express and 2435/2436 Guwahati-New Delhi Rajdhani Express. Extension of 2559/2560 Varanasi-New Delhi Shivganga Express upto Ballia is not feasible, at present, due to operational constraints including severe line capacity constraints on Varanasi-Aunrihar section.

Ban on booking of parcels

1174. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the East Coast Railway has imposed a ban on booking of parcels weighing more than 20 kgs.;

(b) whether it is also a fact that no other Zonal Railway has imposed such a ban;

(c) if so, the rationale behind imposing this ban by the East Coast Railway;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) whether this ban apart from hard-hitting the businessmen, agriculturalists and small scale industries in the State, is also resulting in the fall of parcel traffic income of the Zonal Railway; and

(e) if so, the action plan of Government to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No general ban has been imposed on booking of parcel consignments weighing more than 20 kgs. Parcels of any quantity can be booked by rail subject to availability of accommodation in train. However, any package weighing more than 20 kgs. are not accepted for booking as parcel traffic by any train, when it is clubbed and packed together w.e.f. 1.7.2005. Perishable parcel traffic and single item package weighing more than 20 kgs. were exempted from this order.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. With a view to streamline loading, East Coast Railway has imposed ban to avoid booking of heavy consignments. The main reasons for rationalisation are as under:—

Merchants generally club many items to make a big package. Such a big and heavy package need three/ four persons to handle a single package. When number of heavy packages are many, train suffers detention for loading/unloading.

Causes haphazard loading within the Brakevan. Shelf space of the Brakevan remains unutilized.

Causes jamming of passage and Brakevan door.

Makes the packages dumped below or behind heavy packages untraceable at the enroute unloading points.

Causes over carriage of parcels.

Causes damage due to rough handling and delays in transit.

The handling of too many heavy packages causes stress to the labourers.

In view of the above, East Coast Railway has decided to reduce the weight of packages offered for booking as parcel traffic. The reduction in the number of heavy packages would make geographical stacking, utilization of shelf space, easier loading/unloading possibility which would benefit the business and the railways. More parcels will reach their destination in time with less chances of damage.

(d) The difficulties faced by merchants, were taken into consideration in a review meeting taken by East Coast Railway and the limit of parcels has been increased from 20 kgs. to 30 kgs. w.e.f. 5.08.2005. This has been

undertaken as an experiment on parcel traffic by East Coast Railway and it has been observed that the earnings on parcel traffic from the month of July 2005 to October 2005 have increased by 5.21% in comparison to the corresponding months of last year.

(e) The subject will be reviewed in the normal course after gaining sufficient experience.

Launching of more Luxury Trains

1175. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to launch more luxury trains like "Palace on Wheels" in certain States to boost tourism to improve the economy of the respective regions;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that the historical heritage of Orissa is one of the most sought after religious hubs in the world, i.e. Lord Jagannath Temple in Puri and around 500 other spectacular temples and Maths in the State;

(d) whether Government also propose to run such a train to improve the economy of this backward State; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) A Memorandum of Understanding has been executed between the Indian Railways and the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) for introducing a luxury tourist train in the Karnataka sector. Presently, there is no other proposal for launching such trains in other States.

Extension of Nizamuddin-Orissa Hirakud Express

1176. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he had in the recent railway budget for the year 2005-06 announced that Nizamuddin-Orissa Hirakud Express would be extended up to Vizag; and

(b) if so, by when it is likely to become operational?